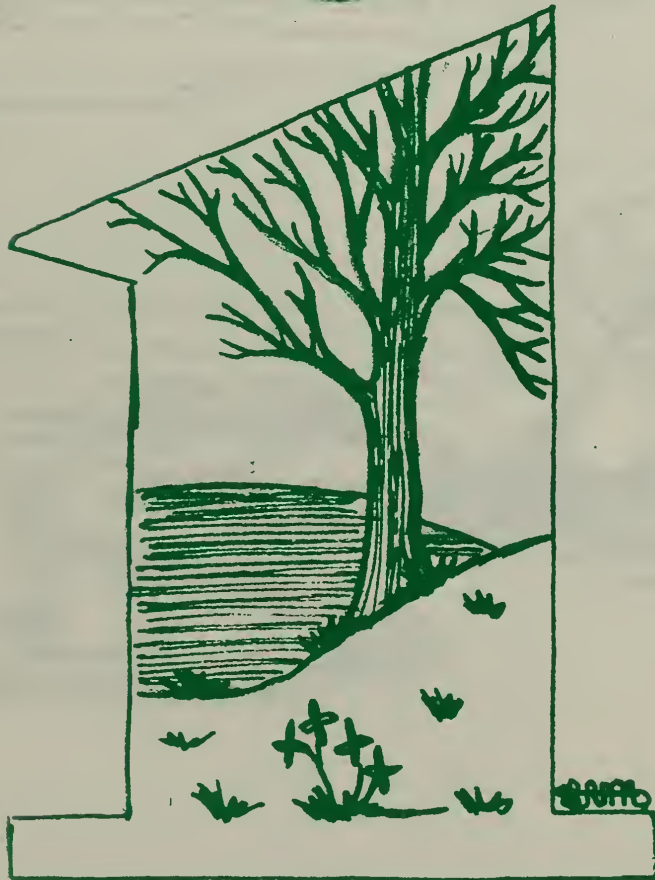


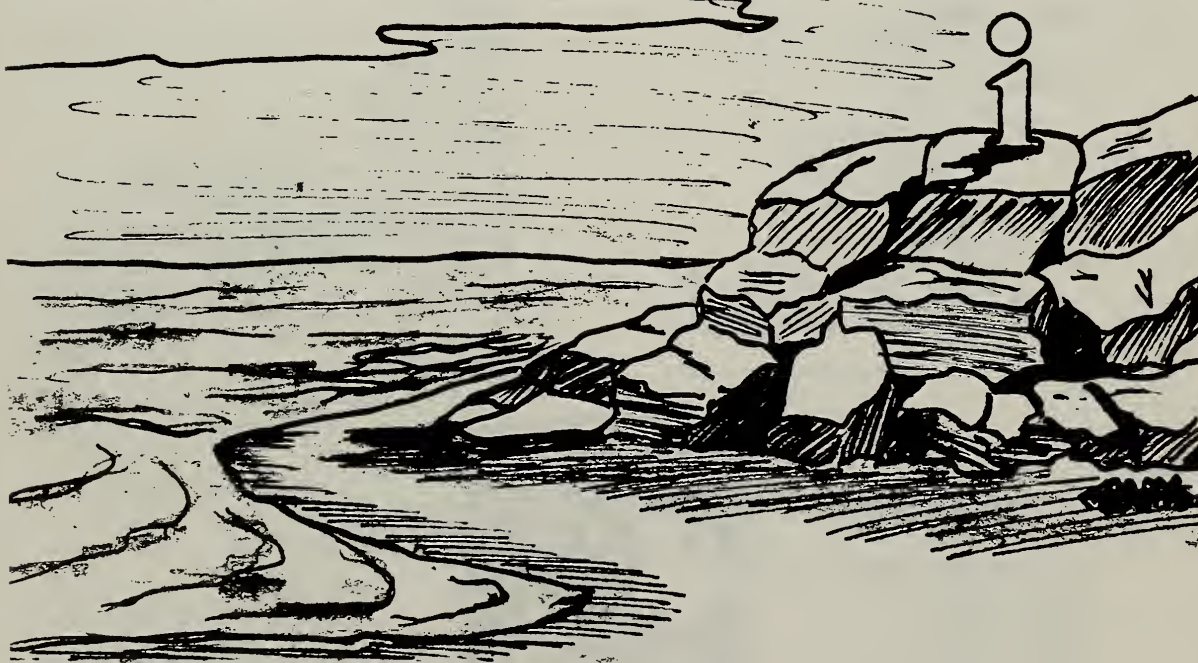
i magazine



a mount wachusett student publication

Dedicated to Professor Michael N. Kressy

You have been like the candle which lights others in consuming
itself. That you have kindled so many of us should be your pride.
That you have been consumed should be our shame.



WEST STREET REVISITED-ALMOST

A glowing box
lights the room
The picture show
relates the doom
of those
who won't obey
to children
staring
left to say
away
away
away from the glow
in a mother's eyes
dulled from a bottle
deaf to the cries
of "why? why?"
"Oh God why?"
---an age without an age

Away
Away too
from the strength
of a man
a glass
surrounded
by his outstretched hand
limp and numbed
like memory's cause
drowned
like the other's
menopause
---forgotten clumps
of unkempt hair
---forgotten cesspool
over where
the children never played

But oh the days the children played
They chased the wind
in every way
And only caught their own
at last
when fallen
like the painted cast
they dreamed
of other days

And as the mud
came and went
from broken dreams
and discontent
grew out the seeds
of what it meant
to live
and love
but once
Yet their roots
grew deep
And their stems
grew strong
And their branches
reached
for the sun

MICHAEL SCIABARRASI

* * * * *

SYNTHETIC KALIEDASCOPIC SUNSHINE

What kind of tomorrow
are we building
today?
When children see sunsets
as cellophane sea
a crayola panorama,
not to be,
And snow dusted pastures
as tinsel and glitter,
Glow sent from Christmas!
The chipmunks and sheep
are a
Sherri Lewis Menagerie
Where lambs are blue
and say things you
hear without listening,
Clouds look like cotton
or marshmallow fluff,
And in the Captain Kangarooster
reality
That is fastly coming ours,
We stroll with our babies on the "astroturf,"

BONNIE BAER

PUSSY WILLOWS

Brave proud kingly pussy willows
Bursting forth first
Beating them all
Slyly nudging us
That Spring is here
"Look at me!"
You shout,
I look
I pick
You don't resist
I feel your majesty
Your willingness to be plucked
Gracing my desk
You nod, bringing the whole forest with you
Stale goldenrods, decaying milkpods,
Bare branches all about you,
But you, with your fresh new sprouted fuzzy balls
Inviting admiration and respect that you are King of this
season,
Dirty snow at your base smothering dead leaves,

PHYLLIS JAMSA

CITY LIGHTS

Excitement in shocking pink
that comes alive
in the complexity'
of flashing lights
dancing their way
along post-dusk streets
suddenly swarmed
with aching focus
upon this world
merely switched on
longing
for that horizon
flicked upon
from heaven
alone.

LINDA SHERKSNIS



LOOKING, LOOKING

I'll look for you
in the morning,
before the sun,
where warm thoughts are covered
by blankets and quilts,
When minds race and bodies sleep,
I'll look for you,

If not finding
I'll try to live, needing to,
Finding sun, rain, frogs and birds,
and persons whom I cannot touch,
Then, running away,
I'll look for you, still,

WILLIAM DARING

THE PATRIOT

If Thomas Jefferson lived today he'd be in jail,
Or sendin' radical cards through the mail,
And Patrick Henry's face would be pale,
As he walked along the Freedom trail,
Or heard the teachers teach his tale,
Washington's words would fly like hail,
But they'd break his neck like a piece of shale,
And Nixon wouldn't pay his bail,
Ben Franklin would laugh as he heard them bail
To the chief as they tied him to the rail,
The train of Freedom's whistle'd wail,
And Nixon would drive the final nail,
Into the hearts of the men whose dreams did fail,
They'd drain their blood into a pail,
And throw it into a raging gale,
But their bloody hands and bodies frail,
Could never stop the dealers deal,
And their shining guns and flashing steel,
Would make the revolution real,
Two hundred years ago freedom came,
And there's still a chance it will come again,
And when you look into the iron pen-
You'll see a patriot now and then,

LEO BALDWIN

THE WEEKLY GATHERING

Have you ever knit in time with thought?
String beads or stich a popcorn knot?
And listen to the others speak,
While thinking of a day last week?

See my fingers race in patterned bows,
The furrowed face, the pigeon toes.
In shimmering - sweet stare, my eyes are caught,
They probably think I'm using pot!

And then I break, and face the pain,
Of aching back, of talking game-
Polite inquests of daily dids,
Adorable doings of bratty kids, . .

How loud they boast, when they'd rather be,
By themselves and watching T.V.
Of adding new rooms, and colored hair,
When the people around don't really care!

Oh well, it's the rules of the "I have too game",
So I'll raise my head and talk the same,
"My husband and I, in Europe we'll be. . .",
When down in my head,
it's knit one and pearl three.

LAURI BRENNER

GIRL WITH A NAME LIKE A SPORTS CAR

Your eyes, an unearthly blue
With a crisp, icy freshness
Free form, the falling hair
I put my tongue ever so gently upon your brow
Tenderly touch your lid and lashes
Back-a moment of insecurity
Go west young man
I take the eye between my lips
In hopes that my mouth might see
Pupil
Salty, disturbing, has to be
I drink your tears, they become my own
They riverrun down my cheek
I'm still on my way home

MATTHEW HIRONS

CIRCUS AIR

Circus air can be bought in a can
What then of the air of man
Are we matter for public display
Are we here to amuse - to play

I dangle limply in the air
Supported by two strings
With a mighty effort, clear
I reach up and cut those things

I fall, featureless
My body a bowl for unfrozen jello
I'll make a gelatin salad, of fruits, of that
and of this
One day wake up to the world; hello,

MATTHEW HIRONS



EVEN ONWARD

In
tri-laned
roster,
i steer my
bus on divided
superhighways,
driving
in column-like
arrangement,
i push
admittance to
urban walls---
those walls
of unknown thrills
and smog---
attune with
beats of
horns and hearts,
i rush to
enjoy, escape, explore;
Others,
i syncopate
in
City steeets
compulsive motion
directs my
epic feet,
i falter,
pause, ask
"WHY? WHERE? WHATEVER?"
i fall, the
driven trample
ME
i am Sister to
the grass of sidewalk
cracks
Less one, the
Lines
shove
EVER...
ON...
WARD.....

LINDA DOYLE

the sun light
flickers in from behind the closed venetian
blinds-
the sheets on the bed
are crumpled
and used-
an ashtray
is silent and overflowing;
idly the
secret air
whispers in from somewhere
stealing some of the ashes
spilt on the floor-
the toilet flushes
and belches into the underground-
nothing but an open bottle of wine in the
refridgerator
not a blessed morsel of food-
nothing like old 1969,
stale...
another unemployed sticky day-
something like yesterday,

LYNDA MATTHEWS



CHARADES

WOOD PLANKS

Wood planks,
blackening, splintering-once arranged
as a serviceable home, now reveal the
negligence of tenants who filled all
holes with putty, ignoring the termites
who bored them in the frame,
These unplanned men, who inherited such
a decaying monument to many pasts,
force strong new nails into the frag-
menting siding,
Vain attempts,
Pulp powders in the hands who strain
to hold the rotting boards aligned,
Men, wielding traditional hammer heads,
attempt repair. Excessive strain,
The boards split,
The structure collapses,
Parasites flee,
Those people who remain,
those exposed,
design a new structure,
And build it
on the old foundation,

LINDA DOYLE

Just how often
will you try to cue me with brooding silence, to say
certain words which confine, which summarize
my feeling for you?
Why must you stare, with wide, wistful eyes,
searching my speech for compliments
and appreciation?

You, who are so sensitive to what you are told--

why can't you notice
when I listen to your account of school that day;
or when you bitch about your little brother
when you expound upon the size of your car's
engine, and the way the Dolphins could use
their defense more successfully...

I never yawn,
And when I let you go home when you say
you're tired -- even though I'd rather
share Nina Simone and David Crosby
with you
or when I clown when you are depressed,
but sense when to commiserate
And when I kiss your closing eyes as
you lay beside me --

Your ego demands to hear
those words I strain to define,
It would be so much easier to verbalize
that which I prefer to charade,

LINDA DOYLE

THE HAWK

Through the day I listened,
I could not hear the hawk fly
I sat, my ears awake,
Heard a rabbit run away,
Smelled the berries growing on a bush,
Saw the woodchuck peeping out,

I could not hear the hawk fly.

The sun spelt out it's heat
On my burnt back,
My eyes grasped a chipmunk
On the pine needles,
His meat was all around,

I could not hear the hawk fly.

GEORGE W. BARNES II

WINTER COMETH

The wind bleeds sorrow to our ears
Leaves have fallen to the ground,
Winter is soon,
Though the snow has yet to fall
The animals have changed their coats
Their coats are damp with tears
An only refreshment

I have watched the woods die
The stiff dead limbs of trees
can sway no more,
The old bones only creak,

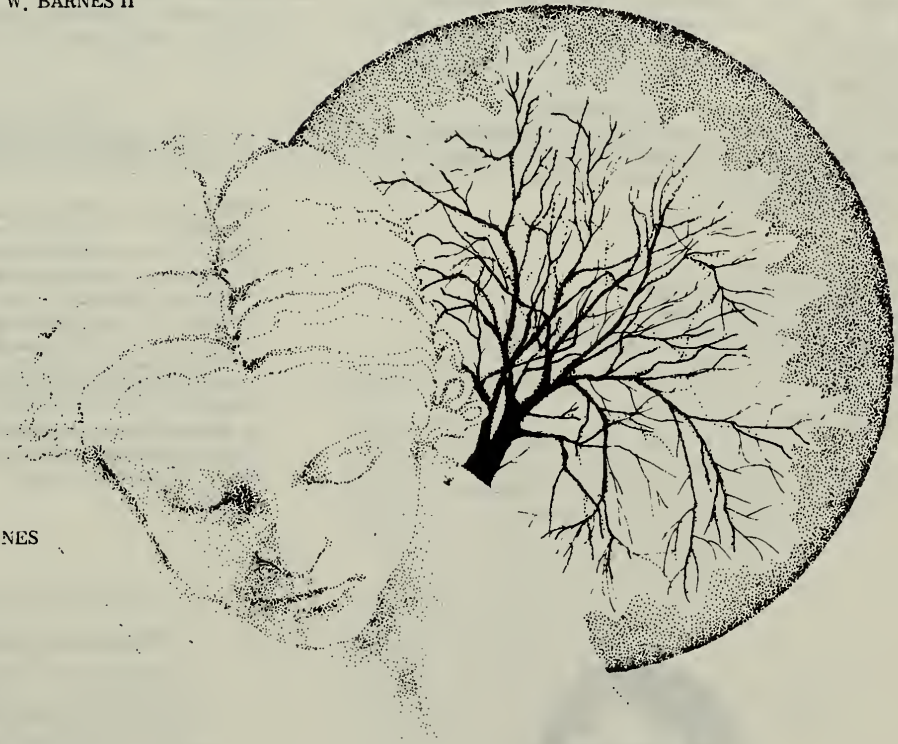
Winter is soon,
All the birds and old people,
Those still alive, fly south
All the rest put on their over coats
Pray at the fireside.

GEORGE W. BARNES

RAIN

Rain in
strands
she
e
t
s
down
wa
r
d
to
litt
le
nests
of ants

GEORGE BARNES



THE HORNET NEST

Humming or a buzz saw
The crate-papered, one holer
Is a cardboard shack,

Two hornets, three,
Four!
In one, out two,
Communities of,
Cities of, nest,
Or living quarters,
For poor workers
In wings of plastic paper,
And the Queen, On
Throne of Gold,
Laying forth the life within,

A summer resort, lasting through
Till time comes, and winter wastes,
Leaving only one
And a rotting throne,

GEORGE BARNES

MUSEUM

two pic
tures

by two
artists

hang in
side a

museum

depicting
the same

one more
costly

the other
more
beautiful

GEORGE BARNES

CROSSROADS

traffic
(blink; go)
In the city
(blink; stop)
funnels in
(blink; go)
ward to a cra
zy mix-ed up me
ss (blink; stop)
with too many people trying
to get too far
(blink; go) without a
ny reason just schedules
to meet

GEORGE BARNES

ONE I LOVED

I WANTED TO TELL YOU THIS

"To drugs or not to drugs, that is the question,"
(and so you put it many times),

The hold was there, the desire strong.

The THOUGHT existed,

Thought is not action, Michael---can lead to, often does, but
is not in itself.

(and so we talked).

"I don't count," you said.

How many times did you say that?

God Almighty, how many times?

To sit on the sidewalk, gazing up into the sun who has
suddenly become a pink God, a silly smile upon your face, . .
to live on bologna sandwiches for three weeks, your home
the public park, . .

"And how the hell did you avoid getting caught?" I asked.
You couldn't answer.

It was just a fuzzy memory to you, a dream.
to find that you need to urinate and so simply pull down
your pants and do so wherever you are, because on Morphine
you don't care about modesty, or things like that, or any-
thing else for that matter, . .

"I don't care" to escape "I don't count."

"I love you," you said.

How many times did you say that?

God Almighty, how many times?

Michael, love begins with "I", extends to "You", and
completes itself in "We."

You left out the first, Michael, and so failed in the others.

I wanted to tell you this.

H.S.



Images float in front of my eyes.
Enchanted chandeliers,
with hundreds of tentacle-like droplets,
slowly light up,
illuminating the awful emptiness.

Spider webs were meant to be broken.
Is this also true of love?

The garbage of my soul
has begun to accumulate
Forgive it.
I was so caught up with you,
I forgot to empty it.

Dottie, Dottie, that spring,
when the slush of winter mingled with the earth,
we were like sisters meeting for the first time;
acting out our symbolic need to be part of one another.

Tonight, I see your face so clearly
behind my closed eyelids.
In my dreams we still sleep together.
Death has not separated us after all.

HOPE SIMON

A SENSE OF FREEDOM

Bright, hazy skies blind me as I,
awkwardly,
stand on the edge of the sandy highway.
The wind from a trailer truck blows against my face,
intimidating me enough to latch onto the steel cable fence
that guards the side of the road.
When the dust clears I gaze at the long, crooked highway
vanishing into a point.
I stand slouched with my hands in my pockets,
waiting
for another car but not another indignant look.
There is a sense of freedom along with my frustration,
hoping the next one will stop.

BRENT ROBICHAUD

THE SALAD GLOATS

In this vegetable saladbowl,
I hide my acetic thoughts
With unctuous words
And proper nuances.
I know you smell
My rotten-tomato disgust;
And sense that my pretense
Of fresh-lettuce respect
Is actually yesterday's
Wilted hate rechilled.
Yet you masticate silently
In helpless rage,
Knowing your perceptions are accurate,
But also knowing you are alone in them.
The smooth oil of my words,
And the expert blend
Of my appropriate actions,
Fool everyone else,
Unlike you.
They have not discovered
That the "expert blend"
Is actually comprised
Of the most inexpensive
And most easily obtained
Ingredients.

HOPE SIMON

KNOW THE TRUTH (KNOW THE LIES)

In the year "Kohoutek arriving"
I was finished with deciding.
But, I heard the asylum owners' cries,
"To know the truth, you have to know the lies,"

I saw the world through a kaleidoscope.
Which robbed me of my only hope.
He whispered as I tried to rise.
"To know the truth, you have to know the lies,"

The bearded words flew like knives,
Cutting down a million lives.
But I heard above the buzzing flies,
"To know the truth, you have to know the lies,"

The dark-blue men state their intentions.
They demand electric vengeance.
Though they're the ones that I despise.
To know the truth, you have to know the lies.

From the bowels of the sailing ships
I heard the cracking of the whips.
This, I learned, as if a prize,
"To know the truth, you have to know the lies,"

The firemen tearing at my brain.
Writhing, crying in their pain.
Screaming at the flaming skies,
"To know the truth, you have to know the lies,"

Know the truth, know the lies.
Know the truth, know the lies.
Know the truth, know the lies.
Know the truth --, know the lies.

Learn them all, before you fall.
So when you hear the liars call.
It will come as no surprise.
To know the truth, you have to know the lies.
To know the truth, you have to know the lies.
To know the truth, you have to know the lies.
To know the truth--, you have to know the lies.

LEO BALDWIN

NEW-TIME RELIGION

Give your life to the church of your choice.
And sing your hymns with a stolen voice.
Religion, yes, is so grand,
But I think it's all pre-planned,
And Jesus Christ has been canned,
By this middle American land,
Give your sons to the church of your choice
And speak your prayers with a humble voice.
Life, you see, is oh so grand,
"My, oh my, you sure got tanned,"
And livin' here has gotten bland,
In this Middle American land,
Spend your life in the church of your choice
And shake your heads as the Hangmen hoist
The man with the holes in his hands,
As you pretend to live his plans,
And sit your ass in some sunny sand,
In this middle American land,
He said nothing about a church of your choice,
As your fingers cut off his voice,
Then you lower him with your hands,
And talk of Hawaii's sands.
And kick the dirt on his coffin, so grand,
And bury him in your middle American land.

LEO BALDWIN

ANOTHER BEER

I wrote two songs and drank two beers.
And in my words I wrote my fears,
It was in the past I shed my tears
And freed myself from all my cares
I'm the only one sittin' here
So I guess I'll have another beer
I wrote a song about some boats heading for a shore
Then I walked to the Fridgidaire and drank just one
beer more
I gave the landlord the fuckin' rent and now I'm
really poor
I listened for an hour and now I'm really sure
I'm the only one sittin' here
So I guess I'll have another beer
I'm up to five and still alive
And if this night I survive
The morning light might revive
Me so I can imbibe
I'm the only one sittin' here
So I guess I'll have another beer
At one A.M. I had my sixth beer
And the type didn't look too clear
And since I'm the only one here
I fell off the God Damned chair
I'm the only one layin' here
As for beer, I ain't got no more.

LEO BALDWIN

JUST TURNED TWENTY

Y'know I can't listen to the radio any more
What TV's done to Rock 'n Roll I really do abhor
On Friday nights I go to Brazell's package store
What ever happened to Dylan's boat "Headed for the shore?"
I've been convinced America is rotten to the core
And the Bill of Rights is now a piece of old folklore
My best friends tell me I'm turnin' cold
I just turned twenty and I'm feelin' old
I work in the shop and smell like a skunk
Then I go home and get myself drunk
My old best friend is doin' junk
If I'd stayed with him I'd be a punk
And I think those boats up and sunk
The stories that Tricky tells are just a great big hunk
Oh shit, my stories barely told
I just turned twenty and I'm feelin' old
I go to school, don't learn nothin' there
What the future holds fills me with fear
The boats and the bottom make an ugly pair
And there really ain't nothin' livin' there
And now I know I just don't care
My god damned brush is filling with hair
My soul you know has already been sold
I just turned twenty and I'm feelin' old
I live in a fourth floor A-P-T
Quite detached from reality
I look out the window and I can see
That Dylan's boats had a place for me
Well, in this land I can't be free
Perhaps I'll pack my carpetbag and head for old Sydney
I might be gettin' a little bold
But I just turned twenty and I'm feelin' old
Well it's midnight now. I'm on my second pack
A glance around this dirty shack
Might show ya what I lack
I wish his boats would come on back
For just a sneak attack
And maybe make a little crack
In the fact, I'm the one in the fold
Who just turned twenty and is feelin' old.

LEO BALDWIN

see through
your galvanized
eyes
and watch
the city lights
flicker in
the coming dawn
until sunlight
fills your fingers
with fire.

brian landgraf



Photo by Stephen Hiron.

SPARROW'S LAMENT

old sparrow
twitchperching upon
your weathered branch
what is it you see?
can you fly as free
as before we came
changing, rearranging
your habits of
daily fare. are
we as wise, or is it us
to disguise this human
folly
this rape of earth
even your tree has
tasted our disease
only to tremble now
should the wind awake
and spend its hoary breath
forage now for what
mass-manufactured particle
your tattered wings may
lead you to
and fight 9 other old gray
sparrows with similar
inclinations,
one day
when all the
sparrows have
dropped apple
blossoms signal no
springs
we'll live in
glass-domed cities,
sterily

brian landgraf

pebbles danced
on the water
and we
magicians
bade them lear
into the sunflames
of evening.
shoes drop helpless to
earth
in rythm with
the pulsating stars unheard,
and sleepless eyelids
crashing
oak leaves fall
like wounded moths
helpless
to the wind, so
many
minds are dead leaves
following like ducklings,
succumbing to the winds
of common unthought
but not we
stepping lightly to
the mad
bluejay laugh

brian landgraf

have you
sat
in a rain so
marrow-chilling
and seen all
god's "lower"
creatures employ
shelter
from nature's
motherly rage,
sealed in their abodes,
the whole wood
seems secure, though
arrowstorms cut
through the damp spring
woodlot's hair.
it
was enough to
force any other to
take leave
at once with
no afterthoughts
but
i remained for the
entire exhibition and
took home
a cold.

brian landgraf





ROPE: a one act play

by JOE MELANSON

Characters: Big Man
Small Man

Description:

Big Man, who is an old man, is wearing a long over coat, a dust covered hat, a pair of dark sun-glasses, and he is not wearing any pants. He has a worn pair of brown sandals. A six foot rope with two hangmans noose at each end, is suspended from above on stage, where under an empty chair, waits.

Small Man has a hockey jersey on and dressed like any average college kid. He is under size compared to Big Man in every way.

Anywhere:

A loud knock:

SMALL MAN -

"Hi. Can we borrow this time for a moment, (with pride) That big noise was me. (looking around) This will do fine." (stepping in, leading the big man by the arm, still looking around)

SMALL MAN -

"This here is big brother. (whispering) He's got feelings." (Small man jumps on chair and places his noose over his head. Looking at Big Man in disgust, as he does the same.) (stopping and now looking up to the ceiling, taking special care readjusting the big man for the right spot)

SMALL MAN -

"I sure can pick them. I'm a college kid. Play hockey too." (pointing to his jersey)

SMALL MAN -

"He can't see good. Too much. . . (raising his hand to his mouth, indicating a drinking problem.) "Hasn't stopped yet," (shaking his head) (big man does the same as if he were drinking)

SMALL MAN

"I have to walk him." (pause. . . as he sits) "I'm tired," (big man moves his lips as if his mouth was very dry and sore)

SMALL MAN -

(without noticing) "He can't talk good either." (puts both hands to his chin, waiting) ". . . Has anybody the time?" (to the audience) Big brother usually gets going about now. When I ask you people for the time," (big brother raises his hand to his mouth as if to drink)

SMALL MAN -

"Do you want to know something. He's not wearing pants, (agreeingly, he shakes his head) Another thing. His feeling is so big he can't stand them on." (both agree with their heads)

SMALL MAN -

"Did he agree?" (stands up, looking up to the big man) Is it time?" (still agreeing)

SMALL MAN -

"Good, Good. (dancing around in front of him like a top) Feelings. Feelings. Feelings. Oh boy. . . here we go," (running to rope length and returning with an invisible object)

"Here big brother. Touch it. He's got feelings. What is it, what is it?" (Big man touches the object with his hand)

BIG MAN -

"It'sssss. . . It'sssss. It's in your hands." (bringing his hand to his mouth, implying for a drink)

SMALL MAN -

"No, no. . . After. What do you feel?"

BIG MAN -

"No, no. . ." (shaking his head in disbelief with his hand still in front of his mouth)

SMALL MAN -

"NO, NO, AFTER, AFTER."

BIG MAN

"After. . ."

SMALL MAN -

"Yes, yes. After."

BIG MAN -

"It's an apple."

SMALL MAN -

"A what? But how can it be an apple?"

BIG MAN -

"because it's from an appletree."

SMALL MAN -

"A pathy?"

BIG MAN -

(very quickly) "Appletree."

SMALL MAN -

(thinking) "Apathy?" (looking at the audience, pointing)

BIG MAN -

"Nooooo. AAPPLLEETTRREEEE,"

SMALL MAN -

"Apple tree. . . (thinking) Yes. Yes, Apple tree. You sure got feeling big brother. (turning to the audience, holding out his hands) APPLE TREE. . . (singing and dancing) Apple tree, apple tree. . . why are you me. . . why are you me. . . (stopping and is puzzled) Apple tree? Me an apple tree. What am I saying (spreads his hands, watching the object fall to the floor) NO, YOU CRAZY OLD LIAR. (pulls on the rope, choking big brother) YOU'RE A BIG LIAR, YOU ARE ALWAYS LYING TO ME. BIG FAKE." (big man lowers his head as if to cry)

SMALL MAN -

"Sure. Cry faker. Cry." (big man indicates another drink)

SMALL MAN -

"NO. Not this time." (pleads again)

SMALL MAN -

"Apple tree. Why do I believe you? It is always the same." (pleads)

SMALL MAN -

"no,"

(big man looks up to the ceiling)

SMALL MAN -

"do you think HE will give you a drink. Piss in your mouth. With your big feeling." (lowering his head, he sits down and dies)

SMALL MAN -

"He's always fooling me. I BROUGHT HIM HERE. (looking at big man dying) He's not dying."

* * *

* * *

THE EDGE

my finger

was

along

the

edge

and

I

had

to

try

to

keep

it

from

falling

over

JOE MELANSON

CAP

by HOPE SIMON

A small boy with a short torso and long, thin, gangling arms and legs walked into the dining room of the Willis Hall School for Boys, a private school at which he had been boarding for three weeks. He sat down at a table with nine other boys.

"What's a matter, Cap?" one boy asked him. "Lost your best friend?"

"No," he said quietly. He was in no mood for talking. He had just received another C- on a history test, the third in a row. He was discouraged. He was wondering what sense there was in working your hardest if it got you nowhere.

"Hey Cap," a boy called, "how'd you like the dance last night?"

"Fine," he replied quietly. The other boy looked at him. "God, you're a lousy liar. Your whole face shows it."

"All right," Cap said (again quietly), "I had a lousy time. Are you happy now?" The other boy began laughing. "God, you're funny," he cackled. "Yeah," said Cap, "really funny, a real funny guy."

The other boy paused in his banter to stuff some food in his mouth, then turned his attention to another boy.

"Christ," he thought, "you call it 'funny'; why don't you try 'lonely.'" He began to eat his meat slowly. Then he heard it. It was a small voice unlike the others, a totally unfamiliar voice. It was calling him. He looked about, but saw no one who was trying to get his attention. Then the voice said, "Look up." Cap did, and there, suspended from the ceiling, hung a white cloud about three feet long and two feet wide.

"Cap," the voice was gentle and soft, "Cap, come with me."

Cap licked his lips and looked about him to see if the other boys had seen and heard the cloud, but they were all eating and talking normally as though nothing unusual had happened. His thin lips mouthed the words, "Come where?"

The cloud smiled and bobbed in the air. "To a wonderful place, Cap, a place where there is no loneliness and discouragement."

Cap licked his lips and mouthed, "How can I get there?"

"All you have to do is believe in me, Cap. That's all."

Cap started. Was the cloud going to leave now?

"No, Cap," it said, as though knowing what Cap had been thinking.

Cap smiled. It felt good to be understood without having to express anything verbally.

"I'll be with you all the time, Cap, as long as you want me, and believe in me."

Cap smiled and mouthed, "I believe in you and I always will."

The cloud rippled with pleasure. "Oh Cap," it said, "I'm glad you believe in me, because you're someone special to me."

Cap remained silent, but where he had felt loneliness before, he now felt a warm little glow. Cap had a friend, a very special friend, a cloud.

Dinner was over now and the dismissal bell had just rung. The boys were leaving the dining room in groups, except for Cap who walked alone.

Cap walked back to his dorm and entered his room. It was study hall now. He sat down at his desk and opened his history text-book. Slowly Cap's eyes wandered from the book to the corner of the room. There was the cloud, bobbing merrily in the air. Cap smiled. The cloud winked at him. Cap turned back to his book and sighed. Then he heard another sigh. He looked sharply at the cloud. It was laughing at him. Cap chuckled to himself, "pretty good, pretty good." It had been a pretty good imitation of his own sigh. Cap bowed mockingly to the cloud. The cloud chortled in silent mirth and Cap listened to the silent laughter. Cap thrust aside his book and closed it. "I'll probably get a C- without studying just as well as if I did study."

He leaned back in his chair and seriously observed the cloud. The cloud hovered gently in the air. "Well," said Cap. The cloud wavered. "I'm tired," said Cap. "I think I'll go to bed." The cloud nodded in agreement. Cap slipped out of his clothes and into his pajamas. "Good night," Cap said as he snuggled down into his bed. The cloud hovered back and forth for a minute and then was quiet. Cap gave one last flick with his hand to the black shock of hair that fell across his forehead. Slowly his tensed body relaxed and the deep miasma of sleep filled the room.

That night Cap had a dream. He dreamt he saw a large hand reaching down towards him from a height. The hand was firm and strong. The fingers were thin and steady, yet gentle looking. Cap dreamt he was struggling, struggling to reach this hand which was so desirable. In his dream he felt scared and frightened, yet somehow sure that if he could reach that hand everything

would be all right. He struggled and struggled and struggled. Finally, as he came just within reach of the hand, it faded and vanished.

Cap woke with a jerk and cast a frightened eye about the darkened room. He was scared, and he didn't know why. He went over the dream again in his mind. He felt there was nothing in it that should have frightened him; yet he was now lying in bed, scared and frightened. He shuddered involuntarily and switched on the light over his bed. Cap breathed easier as the room flooded with light and the familiar objects became visible once more. It was today as it had been yesterday and as it would be tomorrow. The thought gave Cap a sense of security, a feeling of reassurance.

Cap turned out the light. He would try again. He snuggled down in his bed and pulled the covers about his neck. He tried to think of all the pleasant things he could, but it was no use. All he saw was the hand, and himself straining to reach it. He shuddered and choked. Swiftly his hand sought the light switch and flicked it on. With wide, terrified eyes he stared at the worn spot on the wall. Oh why, why the nightmares? Almost every night he had them, a different and more terrifying one every time, and none of them made any sense, at least not to Cap.

Cap walked across the room and took out a book from the near-by shelf. He decided he would read Winnie The Pooh for the rest of the night. Good old Pooh Bear always left him feeling relaxed and comfortable. And Eeyore, poor old miserable Eeyore, and lovable Piglet, not to mention Christopher Robin. How he loved them all. He settled back in his bed with the book propped on his knees.

Something flickered in the corner of the room and caught his eye. Cap turned. There, bobbing quietly, was the cloud. Cap made a brave salute to the cloud, trying to bluff away his fear. The cloud winked back as if to say, "I know, I understand." Cap smiled and a deep warm feeling spread over him.

It was the following morning and Cap filed into history class along with several other boys.

"Take out pencils and a piece of paper," said the teacher.

"Another test, another C-," Cap thought.

The teacher passed out the tests. Cap read the question. It made no sense to him. He read it again. It still made no sense to him. Trying to get a grip on his rising panic, he went over the question a final time. Still nothing. For a moment, a feeling of terror came over him, but then it left, leaving him with a calm, almost lethargic feeling. He stared moodily at the question, no longer seeing the words. He thought of a poem he had read once:

The world is so great and I am so small,

I do not like it, at all, at all.

"That's how I feel," thought Cap, "as though everyone is bigger than me and picking on me." He paused a minute. "Why, why do I think things like that? Why do I feel hunted and hounded on all sides? It isn't Willis Hall, I like the school, and I like the teachers, too. But there's something wrong. There's something terribly wrong."

"He raised his head and looked out the window. "All right, so it's not Willis Hall and it's not the teachers. It must be something." He clenched his hands and thought, "Why does it seem as though four walls surrounded me wherever I go, stopping me from doing what I want to do, stopping me from saying what I want to say, blocking me from people and shutting me out? What are these walls made of? Why do they control all my actions and twist all my thinking?"

Yet, even as Cap sought an answer, he knew it. "Because these walls are made of fear, a deep down strangling fear, a fear of people." That's it. He was scared. And he knew it. "But what," Cap wondered, "can I do about this fear? Nothing. Absolutely nothing, except try to live quietly with it, covering up this sensitivity to people and trying to pretend it doesn't exist." Every day after encounters with people--through which he would bluff his way--Cap would come away inwardly asking himself, "why me?" And always there was no answer save for silence.

The bell rang and the class was over. The teacher collected the papers while Cap and the other students filed out of the class room. He thought of the test and realized he had written nothing on his paper.

Cap's last class that morning was math. He liked this new math they were learning. Everything made sense. It wasn't like the old math where all he had seemed to be doing was memorizing rules. This was all reasoning. Everything was thought out and planned logically. Cap liked logic. He liked to think things out in an orderly, step-by-step procedure.

The teacher was saying that two points were contained in one line.

"That makes sense," thought Cap.

The teacher then went on to explain that these two points

continued

were coplanar; that is they were on the same plane.

Cap observed the teacher closely. She was a young woman with short blonde hair. Her two front teeth crossed each other, but the rest of them were straight. Her lipstick was faint, but still dark enough to accent the white of her teeth. Cap thought of the day before. She had spent one of her few free hours going over a technical point with which he had been having trouble. He had asked her for the help, and she had given up her free time willingly to do so. Cap looked at her closely and a warm rush of love swept over him. He was grateful that of all the teachers to whom he could have been given as an advisee, he had been given to her.

That afternoon, Cap went to the mail room to see if he had any letters. As he entered the room, one boy called out, "Hey Cap, you got a letter. I looked in your box for you."

"Thanks," said Cap as he walked over to his box. He hoped it was a letter from his father. Cap's parents had been divorced for years. When Cap wasn't at school, he spent a few months first with one parent, then with the other, but it was his father to whom he had turned again and again for help and guidance. Cap had never felt close to his mother. He saw in her someone who had once been closer to his father than he himself was now, and he saw in her someone who had deeply hurt the father he idolized.

He thought of how, when he stayed at her house, she feigned disinterest at the letters he received from his dad. He knew she wanted to read them, though, because he saw her reading one once when she thought he wasn't looking. He never told her that he saw her, but he never forgot it. "If she'd only asked," he thought, "I'd have let her. But no, she had to do it behind my back." More than anything, though, Cap hated the way she used to tear his father down. "You're no more significant than the bunion pad on a millipede," she would say to his father. Or sometimes she would just call him names like "bad medicine." It had almost reached the point where, every time he had got the flu and had had to take medicine, he'd felt like flinging the medicine in her face and saying, "There's your bad medicine." (But he never had).

"Somehow," thought Cap, "Dad, if you ran with me, ran far enough away, we'd find a place where there was no hate and bitterness." At the same time there was conflict---his mother's steady vigil beside his sick bed, tender caresses to his feverish head, and her soft gentle voice that brought Pooh Bear near. But if he thought of dad, then the confusion was not so great. DAD WAS MAN CAP, MAN-TO-BE.

Cap stuck his hand in the box and fished out the letter. He could tell from the stiff, formal slant of the writing it was from his father, just as he had hoped it would be. He ripped it open and began to read.

Dear Cap (it read)

don't look for me. I've gone. Cap, your mother called me many names, but she left some out. She left out poet, dreamer, Lover of Wife and Children. Children means you, Cap, you and Gail. Children come from parents. I was a parent, Cap. Till suddenly I wasn't. Suddenly I was alone.

Cap stopped, a feeling of horror filling every inch of his body. Gone? Gone where? And why don't look? He gripped the letter more firmly and began reading it again.

Dear Cap,

don't look for me. I've gone. Cap, your mother called me many names, but she left some out. She left out poet, dreamer, Lover of Wife and Children. Children means you, Cap, you and Gail. Children come from parents. I was a parent, Cap. Till suddenly I wasn't. Suddenly I was alone.

I don't know why for all those years there was all that strife. I only know that one day it resulted in my losing what I held dearest, my children and wife.

I don't know why I used to yell and scream, and I can't go on any longer pretending it's just a "Bad dream" from which I'll awake.

Because it's just not true.

"What's happening?" Cap thought. "What is happening here?" The mail room, the mail boxes, even the packages in one corner were suddenly beginning to seem unreal. "Finish the letter," said a voice within him.

Cap, don't be as I was, unknowing of what you have, when you have it. And if you don't have something and want it very badly and know you can never have it, don't pretend that you do have it.

Because it's just not true.

I began this letter by saying, "don't look for me. . . I've gone." Cap, your mother called me many names, but she left one out, Suicidal. You tell her, Cap. She won't open my letters. You'll have to tell her her "once" husband is dead,

Good-by Cap

Dad

Back in his dorm, then his room, then on his bed, flat on his back, legs rigid, neck thrown back, ("gone") was a whisper while SUICIDE was a scream.

"Cap. . ." Through it all was a voice that compelled, that voice that was lilting and loving and lyrical. . . "Cap, come with me."

And he was back again to four walls, a room, a bed and desk, and desk led to pen and pen led to letter. . . "Come where?" spoke his voice in a voice not his.

"I've told you before, but I'll tell you again. To a wonderful place, Cap, a place where there is no loneliness and discouragement, a place where there is no hurt and pain."

"Yes, I remember. And all I have to do to get there is to believe in you and there won't be any pain," he answered in his "stranger" voice.

"Yes," said the voice caressing his ears. "Believe in me, look at me, special friend, cloud," (and so it was)

"Come run with me, Cap. Come far away. Come flee with me, Cap, In fantasy."

(And if you don't have something and want it very badly and know you can never have it, don't pretend. . .)

SUICIDE

"Did he hate me so much to do this to me? Did we ever really have that 'loving we'?"

"No," said the voice that was truth and pretend. "Your father didn't hate you; he bled for you, cried for you, loved for you, died for you. . . Believe in me, Cap. Believe in me."

Doubt. Truth. Half-truths.

There was a numbness about him that was beginning to smother his thoughts. The room was growing quiet. "Just like my grandfather's funeral," he thought, "everything clothed in shadow and darkness. Why do people have to die?"

Suddenly to his knees, suddenly shirt drenched in sweat, suddenly vomit. Once, twice, retching and silence. Then it ripped out of him in a scream that bounced off the walls and vibrated in the air. "Help me!" he screamed. He thrust his arms out, trying to grasp the wall for support. His nails scraped against its smooth surface. He drew his hands away and clasped them in each other. "Help me!" he cried. "Oh God, help me!" And softly, "Oh please, God Almighty, please."

. . . Stretcher. . . White. . . Strapped. . . Needle. . .

"None of this is happening," flute-like and soft. "Not really. Not if you believe it isn't happening. . . You are little, Cap, little again. Child, child, child."

a little boy with short, chubby arms and legs, a wide smile that seemed too big for his face and a small head with short black hair. Now! legs lengthened out and thin, head grown larger, face longer and narrower, yet somehow. . . somehow. . . that same look of innocence, that look of angelicity, that look of a poet, a dreamer, a father. . . HIS!

Gagging. Tears streaming down cheeks.

"All those years. . . All those years. . . We made the mistake, but we didn't mean to. . . We didn't mean to make the mistake. . ."

Try again. Make her understand.

"If we'd really tried we could have found a remedy for the mistake. . . I know we could have. . . If we'd really tried we could have found a remedy for the mistake. . . Why didn't we try harder? . . ."

(You tell her, Cap, she won't open my letters, you'll have to tell her her "once" husband is dead.)

Try again. Make her understand.

"It's important. . . Very important. . . You've got to believe me. . . Father. . . Father believed. . ."

Eyes rolling from side to side, jutting out from their sockets, Nostrils distended, Mouth foaming with bubbling, white saliva. Try again. Make her understand.

"Father believed. . . Life without purpose is death. . . Life. . . Children. . . Wife. . . Purpose. . . Death with purpose is life. . ."

. . . Death with Purpose is Life. . .

Father did,

and then she knew.

WALK A GENTLE PATH

by RONALD L. HERBERT

The snow fell softly, capping the evergreens in a downy, spiraling, quiet, tinsel. Squirrels and chipmunks raced from the bottom of the big oak, in the front yard, to their homes somewhere beneath our porch. I silently chuckled, for in less than a minute they were once again darting and leaping and frantically searching for acorns they had neglected to collect before the snow had settled. I decided then, that a helping hand, full of sunflower seeds, would be left under the old oak, simply to build their stockpile in an easy fashion, lest they should die from over exertion. I certainly would!

I had walked farther than I had planned, but never before had I enjoyed it so much. I was at a stream where I had spent almost all of my youth. It's said that the only memories one holds, are the ones that he or she is most fond of. I suspect it to be true, for this stream will flow in my mind for eternity. Its crystal waters had allowed me to bathe, fish, study, day-dream, laugh, cry, and pray in it, or beside it, for as long as I can remember.

It was getting late and I was of an attitude not to be lingering any longer. So I moved on. Minutes passed quickly, and in no time I found myself in my back ten. I noticed a movement a few hundred yards to my right, and became excited when I realized it was a doe and her fawn. The sight of the doe made me proud I owned the land. But the stilt-legged, clumsy newborn made me feel a sense of warmth. I couldn't help but laugh outright. Needless to say it spooked them. All I could do was watch as they crossed over the stone wall boundary, and onto Jake Sagadornes' property. The grace of the doe and the awkwardness of the fawn still had me caged in a trance. I wandered toward them, hoping to once again see them up close. But as I approached a shot rang clear, in the crisp, cold air. The doe dropped. . . The fawn questioningly wandered toward its silenced mother. Another shot suddenly intruded on the bitter evening. . . the newborn fell.

Jake Sagadorne walked toward his prizes, and the rage within me grew so great I could no longer contain it. . . another shot pelted the stillness. . .

They read a sermon in church for Jake, but nobody attended the burial. . . except some squirrels and chipmunks, darting and leaping and frantically searching for acorns they had neglected to collect before the snow had settled.



MY PERSPECTIVE ON A GRAND QUILL DIPPER

by RONNIE HERBERT

You ask, "A flower. Mr. Twain, how do you see a flower?"

I believe Mark Twain would counter with: A flower? Why I see it with my eyes, but to answer your question in a more candid manner, were I to simply see a flower, I expect that the literature I produce would not be worth its weight in Mississippi mud. "I have to inspect fully for my own personal gratification don't you know. I'll show you a flower my friend." At this point I can sense Mr. Twain moving toward a Black Eyed Susan. "It's boasting you know."

"Boasting, Mr. Twain?"

"Yes, boasting, my friend. Wouldn't you if your bonnet were bursting with sunlight, and your eye were the center of interest for the creativity of the bees?"

"I find it hard to answer that question, Mr. Twain."

"How old are you, my friend?"

"Beg your pardon, sir?"

"Your age! How old are you?"

"Sixteen at the next full moon sir."

"Ahhh, that adds a great deal of sugar to the drink."

"Sir?"

"Simply gathering order of my thoughts, lad."

"Are you sure the flower is boasting, Mr. Twain?"

"Come along lad, and I'll tell you how I know it for a fact!"

"Yes sir."

"Now lad, I didn't pick the flower did I?"

"No, Mr. Twain."

"Nor did you, right lad?"

"No, sir."

"Now look back to the flower."

The boy turns, looks for a moment at the flower swaying gently in the noonday breeze, then reverses his look to the solemn countenance of Mark Twain. Two widening smiles are exchanged, and the pair continue their country-side walk with both young and old curiosities quenched.

LIVES

by RONALD L. HERBERT

Aimlessly wandering. The surf gently rolling over our feet, breakers playing a symphony just for us. The sand leaving the imprint of our toes, is much the same as our hearts imprints on one another. Is it love? Oh. . . it's love.

An old man fishing by the jetty, his Collie dog by his side, now and then thwarting off the attacks of the busy harborvoiced seagulls. He casts his line from dusk to dawn by moonlight. Dawn to dusk by sunlight. Is it love? Oh. . . it's love.

The light-keeper on the point, adding candles to his cautioning beacon life, then searching the misty darkness for signs of his only neighbors. Solemnly returning down the forged rock spiral to a warm burning hearth and a tattered overstuffed chair. Is it love? Oh. . . it's love.

A fishing trawler captain, his hands torn from a lifetime of netting. Once his ship was the pride of the thirty-odd trawlers moored in the harbor. Now it's the mis-shaped, paint-chipped reminder of a by-gone era. Still. . . every morning before sunrise the proud captain hoists anchor and tugs his nets in a sea that bitterly yields less each day. Is it love? Oh. . . it's love.



GREEN

by JIM WILEY

The back stairs of the shop were worn from decades of use. A fine, grey dust had collected on its surface over the years and no-one had ever seen it really clean. On the top floor, the Bending Room showed the same dirty grey and the air flow which carried it there made no distinction between this department and the others. To the ever-accumulating layers of grey, it was all the same.

A fine haze of sunlight shone through the dust covered windows of the Bending Room and slanted toward the piston driven presses anchored to the floor. The 8 o'clock passage of an automatic life broke the silence as it swept past, carrying a dour-faced driver and his load. The driver nodded to Bob Green who had just hurried in through the back door.

Green was feeling low this morning after an all night party with his girlfriend. They had drunk a lot of Wild Turkey and been up half the night carrying on, much to the chagrin of the neighbors. But now he was in the shop and the motor had to be started and the presses set up and boy did he feel lousy. He opened his locker and hung up his coat, took a peek at his porno pictures, changed into his sneakers and pressed one of the red buttons on the wall. He was rewarded with a deafening shriek which immediately died down to a steady hum as the exhaust fans drew air through the huge exhaust system overhead. He pressed the other red button which started the pressure pump and then moved about the room opening the steam valves on the presses. Next he opened the valves on the steam boxes and soon hot steam began seeping out of the iron monsters and into the ventilator shafts.

The boxes were old and had to be babied. One door had a single rusty hinge, the other hinge had dissolved long ago. Others were patched and leaked; he had placed buckets to catch the drip. When everything was running proper he glanced at the clock and saw fifteen minutes remaining before the chair bottoms would be ready for bending. He hurried into the next department, waved at Birdman LeBlanc propped up at his desk in the stockroom and eventually arrived at the Department Office. Glancing quickly over the assortment of faces he noticed Steve Wolanski, foreman, wreathed in smiles, totally immersed in a conversation with a young lady.

Putting on his best manners he approached the foreman and piped in his little boy voice:

"May I please use your phone, kind sir?"



Wolanski glanced up and smiled.

"Sure go right ahead."

As Green dialed the number, Wolanski winked at him.

"More trouble with your girl friend?"

Green raised his eyes in a gesture of despair. Wolanski grinned and returned to his conversation.

The line at the other end rang several times before a low, sickly female voice answered. "Yes?"

"Is that you chu-chu bird?" he asked gently.

"Bob! she cried with relief. I'm so glad you called. I think I'm dying. My heart is fluttering and I'm shivering and I can't get warm. Besides that, I've been very ill."

He was instantly concerned. "Well, did you call the doctor? Can you get to the hospital?" He spoke pleadingly. Then in a low whisper since heads were turning in his direction: "Look honey. I can't go up there now. I'll get fired if I take any more time off. They'll fire me!" he spoke in a fierce whisper.

For a moment there was silence on the other end of the line. Then in a hoarse voice she began: "Look Green, if you still want me you'd better get over here." She hesitated, then spoke in a low pleading voice: "Honey, I really need help this time."

"Sure just like every time you drink too much. Just take some aspirin and go to bed. I'll be there as soon as I get off work."

Now she was angry. "You never gave a shit about me, you

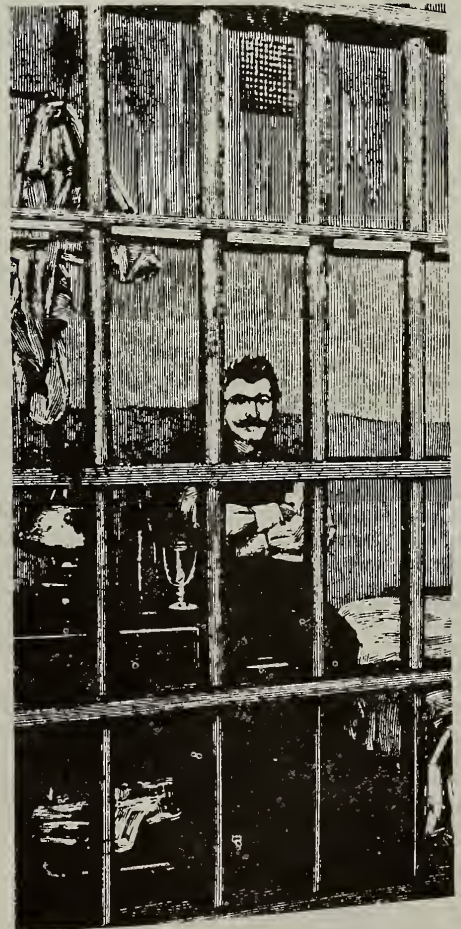
scum." You don't care if I live or die." She started crying.

Green hung up the phone and walked back to his department. The chair seats were ready. He started pulling pieces out of the steam box and loading them on the portable cart. Then he was lining them up on the hot surface of the press.

Finally he turned the red lever and the huge piston, backed by water pressure, moved upward, closing the press.

Unfinished loads of wood came in and finished loads went out. He marked it all down on the sheets of paper. Noontime found him gazing out the window, watching the street below, eating the TV dinner he had cooked on the press. From time to time men from other departments drifted in to catch his jokes and wild stories about him and his girlfriend. He made them laugh. He took away some of the repetition, the dirt, the humdrum atmosphere.

The afternoon wore on as he did load after load. The afternoon sun slanted through the west wall windows as he wiped the sweat from his face. Finally he finished the last load and shut everything down, and rested, beside his locker. When the 4:00 PM whistle blew, Green punched out, waved to Birdman, and hurried off. "Got to see my chu-chu bird!" he yelled. Then he laughed.



THE FORTUNATE FORTUNE

seeing that it was friday being payday and all and last weeks quota you could pad the piecerate so there was a little extra money mrs cobix figured it would pass by unnoticed if she visited that new fortune teller in town she was in a fright though cause mornin her husband wasn't keen on the idea of her gettin those damn prophetic notions in her head he knowed every time she went too her acting all kinds of solemn and the like her mind still affixed and in awe over what the soothsayer foresaw that woman pondered and fretted cause of what she was told he always used to say thats why he didnt want her to go why if whatever came to actually happen was not what completely shed been told she would fill in the gaps not wanting to taint the image of her habit sides she could justify going down there in her own mind with an ace old mory did his drinking most every night no matter how much of a fit she raised about given up so many years and hes a beero too she had her fortune read only once a month if that walking rapidly she came upon the place in the old salvation army store it closed down a few years ago some scandal about those ladies with the hats and somber clothes and how they got their money and all it was on mission street about a mile from her home the sign over the door sort of a shingle for a spiritual lawyer read madam arabarbs house of fortunes and tarot she felt kind of queasy before the heavy oaked doors i spose its a common enough name she thought ive done this a hundred times before what i got to be afeard of this time here she said to herself shaking her arms and trying to get reassurance that rise in courage didnt come too fast though sumptin aint jest right she thought im gettin funny vibrations and sech i dont know if its a good idee to go on in there curocity got hold of her though and she started to push open the door she always done this anyway stallin kinda to build up the mystery and the thought subconscious to the surface so as they might be more easily read at once upon entering the fore-room the smell of jasmine incense kind of put you into a trance as you waited for your turn there was a woman about thirty two or four with a brown frumpy overcoat across her lap it still bein a little nippy this early april evenin the buttons for the second and fifth slots were missing from that ladys coat probably caught in on the sharp side of the seat on the tram theres always sharp things

sticking out on them trams her face had some pockmarks and scars probably acne or somethin as a younger girl anyways she wasnt what you would term pretty but that dont matter anyhow didnt appear to be married either leastways she wasnt wearing a ring or what a young raffish boy of fourteen or so with some sort of deviltry about him his manner or the incense gave him that air was sitting in the corner over near the tall sparsely hooked hatrack his head was bowed and he was fingering the visor of his cap they all had their reasons for being there at the moment but not being a time to share those desires there was no real conversation amongst them save the initial exchange of pleasantries her eyes drifted to the door across the room each person passing peripheral vision into blindness and out her life momentarily as her gaze expectant swept past unlike the door that led to the outside in it was thin almost papy with intricate walnut designs the japanese have paper thin doors but here you keep your shoes on the hum and murmur of voices could be heard if you were of religion to listen audible peekabo although just what was bien said couldnt quite be deciphered just then a rustle and bump of chairs and the door handle was gripped and twisted with a loud squeal from its rusty innards emerged an old woman bent and stooped with age but wearing an unusual grin that took up almost the whole of her wrinkled furrowed face behind her stood a man of medium height with a close cropped mustee and goatche his early morning eyes glistening scanned the room and then trained upon her she could not loose herself from their intent gaze nor did she want to they bathed her in a warm sea a womb the power of which was not diminished in its travel across the room he nodded almost imperceptibly to her she didnt know why he motioned to her before the others who had been waiting longer they faintly scowled at her she rose and entered the inner sanctum inside a table two brown match-

ing leather chairs faced one another across a rotund mahogany table the center of which was a separate part it spun around on a dias underneath the table you could move it by a pedal located near the base of the chair even within striking distance of mrs cobixs stubby legs each side of the center circle had a small indented tray it was an old custom your token of affection it was traditionally reserved for lovers was placed in the tray and the pedaled around the table to the other side to be however received and replied to no mention of money was made she felt at ease though whatever was to come would be good he touched warmly her hands across the table he was looking intently at her wrists and arms and then he started to twist and prick and pull the hairs on her arm up near the skin humped elbow but lightly so as not to be too painful she kind of liked it though wouldnt come out and say it it tingled she shook in her seat once or twice with an attack of nerves in her spine kind of shimmie from the small of the back up through the vertebrae stoping at the brain to register and then out a hole in the top of her head in a deep controlled rehearsed voice the sooth man started to say her fortune he said i dont rightly know your name but whatever it is im sure it must be slow and pretty slide over your tongue and kind of lick it as the syllables emerge you must be thirty or so years old i like the way you wear your hair falls gently around your shoulders a swaddling cloth for a lily white neck you been married more than a few years now and your husband has a common job and doesnt have enough money left over to spend on nice clothes and things for you she whimpered at this and nodded that it was true you feel more of a woman then your mans worth you cook and take care of him when hes sick and even took a part time job a dirty job too do you get any thanks

no he sits around the house after work and drinks beer or goes to the local tavern visiting his cohorts as if they were more interesting that his wife come now we musnt have tears things will be better and brighter for you in the near future though i dont really know what form these better times will come in ill learn more as i get to know you but i can feel them on the way something big it might rise and overtake your whole way or sneak up on you you never know her face raised itself and a pensive smile took the place of the fitful tears she dabbed her eyes with a square piece of white cotton and waited im sorry now but our time together is up he said you must realize that many people are here to see we musnt be greedy although itoo would like to spend more time with you i know five dollars may seem like an awful lot to pay in these times but youll have to understand its a taxing thing i do but i do meet so many interesting people she handed him the piece of paper and was slightly bewildered but the walk home would give her time to think before returning to the drab routine of home and mory he clasped her hands and bid her do return its been a pleasure were his last words she rose and he escorted her to the door of the outer office in the same fashion as the bent old woman as she passed through the room and out the door he nodded to the boy with the cap now dirty and wrinkled with aged thumbprints she stepped outside in the briskevening air and paused my how he knew all those things about me she mused one foot in front of the other she started to trod home now to her husband refreshed,

by KEVIN VIBERT

'Story Teller Cal' was watching small white, ragged, wispy clouds making old people's faces at him. A single thick, gray-black, hand rushed out of the woods by Butch's house. It was so low Cal thought if it had any friends they must have got their feet caught in the trees. He picked out an old man's smiling face just fingers ahead of the swollen black hand, a hand with scarred, throbbing knuckles. Cal wasn't sure, because he blinked when it happened, but he thought he saw quick fingers poke the old man in the eyes before they straightened out and came together with a bent thumb, palm toward the old face. The mean hand seemed to stop for a second, as if to hide something, and then wiped by. The old man's face became visible again. He was frowning now and his soft white hair was messed up. The hand hid behind the leaves of Cal's tree as if it knew Cal saw what it had done. Cal watched with scolding eyes for the coward hand cloud to come out. The dried leaves rattled and the whole tree shook as if it has just been slapped. The hand reappeared, thumb towards Cal and the fingers were much longer and more swollen. They all folded together as if to beckon from where it came. Cal looked up and all the old people were worried now. Weatherguy Cal looked back toward Butch's and he saw why the old folks were not happy and what the hand motioned to. Black faces, tightly packed together, on young bullies with big heads and bodies that were each others peered over a row of pines that were once high. Even with the door closed he could hear them getting even with far away trees that did not mean to grab their feet.

Cal got a sick feeling in his stomach, partly because he was getting scared and partly because he had to use the bathroom.

The tree moved again, a couple of little shakes first and then a Revere gust grabbed it by the throat and shook it like an old time school teacher trying to get a point across to the class dummy. The gust left the same as it had come, with a couple of little shakes. It had many more trees to warn. Cal looked at the tree and repeated what the friendly wind warned, "For God sakes don't grab any feet".

As if from a cue from the out of sight hand, the tangled bullies moved together and half the sky was full of them now. Cal took a last look at the old people and they had sorrowful nursing-home don't-forget-me faces. The lead heads were jockeying for position and gave looks that dared anything below to try something. A face that had not even reached Butch's row of pines spit jagged quick fire. It took a few seconds for the bully clouds to get the joke, then they all thundered a laugh together.

The whole world got dark and unfriendly winds bent the trees' branches and plucked leaves that weren't ready to come off yet. Drops streaked and beaded to a stop on the window and Cal wondered if they were tears from forget-me-not old faces being really worked over now that no one could see.

Cal heard a light thump from Linda's room as Bridie jumped off the bed. He turned around and saw her shivering in the hallway entrance. She looked at him and began to whine. A bolt hit somewhere in the swamp across from Creeds old house and reflected off LeGacy's. The clouds got the joke right away and their laugh shook the house. He turned his head back to Bridie but she wasn't there; a puddle of pee was. He heard her nails scratch at the floor as she clawed to get under the bed she was once on.

Water covered the road and the wind drove the rain harder in some places than in others and made quick dark paths Cal could follow.

A wind grabbed half the tree, the half closest to Cal, and bent the branches till they pointed towards Rouleau's. Cal straightened out his right arm and bent it as hard as he could behind him and he began to feel what the tree felt. Other winds snatched at the branches on the other side but their hands slipped. Cal straightened his left arm, bent it behind him and moved it the way the winds twisted the branches. That bunch of winds passed, Cal relaxed and wondered if trees ever caught colds. Another wind, stronger still, set upon the tree and made eerie whistling noises through the reed branches. This guy wasn't fooling around and giant hands folded the branches around each side till they touched in the middle. Cal straightened his legs, put his bent feet together and his arms went straight out. Another hand flattened the top of the tree and pulled the limbs down till its leaves mixed with the branches from the sides, sort of a three way fold. Cal's body stiffened, he tilted his head back and brought his straight arms



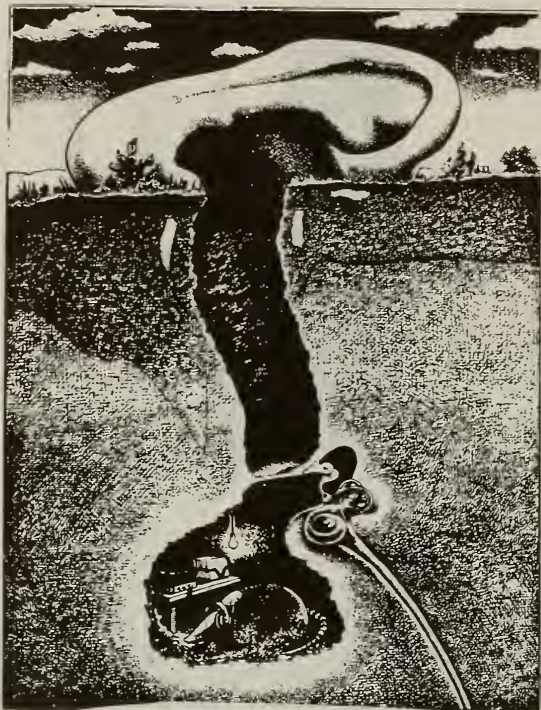
back as far as they would go. Cal felt what the tree felt. He was about to relax as the branches started to where they were comfortable, but the wind was just changing hands for a better hold. The branches bent more than before and the wind tugged and jerked and yanked on them, searching for a weak one. Crucified Cal stretched with his tree. His head was back further than it would go and his shoulders cracked from forced rusty sockets. In his mind he talked to the tree and he told it the things a friend tells another when he's in trouble and the tree told him the same.

Cal's mouth was bent open. His together legs shook like never before; his boney heels thumped uncontrollably and made noises like a dog sitting on a hardwood floor scratching the back of his front leg with his hind foot. A cramp drew his sweaty head back still further, his tongue curled and his eyes rolled back. His straining straight arms had a tight clammy fist at each end. His whole body twitched and shook and skin stretched shoulder blades knocked at the back of his cross chair. Cramps pulled and stretched his entire body and Cal was in pain, but it was a good pain. He squinted his eyelids closed and he saw his tree black eyelids jumped up and his eyes popped out in time to see the transformer, on Mrs. Tanasoka's yelling pole, explode in orange sparks. The house shook and thunder hollered in his ear. Cal didn't need to use the bathroom anymore.

Twice more the packed faces spit jagged fire, this time at the summer cottages on the lake. The laughing bullies thundered up a storm. Bridie began to howl and the fire whistle whined curses at the monsters in the sky.

Cal bit a bottom, quivering lip and he was scared. He wished he wasn't alone and he wondered where Auntie was. He wished Bridie would stop howling so he could think better. He began to cry and he cried hard. He began to hear the sirens of fire trucks and they were headed his way. He sniffed and he wasn't sure but he thought he smelled smoke. He sniffed and sniffed and turned his head back and forth, looking over each shoulder. He grabbed the phone and dialed it and yelled into it and banged at the black things that stick up but it didn't even make the usual buzz. He yelled at Bridie to stop howling but she didn't. He thought about getting burned up and he panicked as he threw down the phone. He had to get a better look behind him. His body wasn't working right and his movements were jerky. He finally got his knees on the seat and his hands gripped the top of the back of his chair. He kneeled up too fast, the chair went over, and his head cracked on the window sill. He didn't feel his body flop to the floor or the chair fall on top of him.

Cal felt a warm feeling on his face, he opened his eyes and had to squint them; it was the sun! He felt a small weight lifted off him and he heard his chair being pushed against the dining room table and he heard, "What'd you do this for? Boy, Cal, do you smell bad! and, "Who you telling not to grab any feet?" and he knew it was Kev. Cal knew he was alive and he began to cry. There came a knock on the front door, Kev opened it and it was Auntie and she said she just came over to check on Cal.



THE PRISONER

by ALBERT HILL

Harris and Miller were dead, Sergeant Kelley as good as, with a bullet-shattered left leg, and Private Tommy Dowd was almost relieved to put up his hands as the bushes all around him parted to let the enemy into the clearing.

As his captors marched him over a much traveled trail, Dowd began having second thoughts about what he'd done. Should he have surrendered? He had heard the rumors about prisoner treatment, the beatings, interrogation, the food or lack of it. Looking at the bland faces of the soldiers walking with him gave him a little reassurance. They didn't care, why should he? By nightfall he was in a truck.

His first impressions of the camp were those of surprise and suspicion. Showered, deloused, and issued a prison coverall that fit very well, better than his regular uniform, he was ushered into the commandant's office. Tommy saluted briskly, suppressing at the same time the smile that had begun to surface. The colonel he was facing gave more than a fair imitation of Santa Claus.

"We already know your name,

rank, and serial number from your dog tags, so the only reason you're here is to meet me and to understand that you'll be treated fairly." The Colonel said, without getting up. "Understand?"

He was ushered out of the office before he had a chance to answer. The building he was taken to was small, certainly not large enough to hold more than 3 or 4 men, he thought to himself. A small sign on the door caught his attention, it read, Thomas Dowd, Private, the implications of this did not really hit him until the guard closed the door behind him.

Early morning sunlight filtering through the large windows revealed a single bed, an overstuffed sofa covered with pillows, and a stereo piled with records. Further investigation uncovered a private bath and a well lighted liquor cabinet that glowed with amber lights. Tommy sat upon the sofa to think for a moment and was almost instantly asleep.

He was awakened a few hours later by an alarm, no not an alarm, he realized as he came suddenly awake, a phone! With trembling hand he brought the phone to his ear.

"Good morning. Breakfast will be served in the mess hall in ten minutes," said a pleasant cheerful voice.

With a mumbled thank-you Tommy hung up the phone. More confused now than ever he walked out into the bright morning sunlight and joined the men lining up at a nearby building. The meal was better than any-

thing he'd had in the army, with three kinds of eggs, sausage, potatoes, toast that was really hot, and real coffee!

Something prohibited him from striking up a conversation with those around him, however. Something was wrong. All the men around him had the same half knowing grins, seemed a bit too cheerful. He hurried to finish his meal.

All the way across the compound back to his room he muttered to himself, "gimmick, gimmick, there's got to be one!" As he walked into his room, an enemy soldier turned from cleaning his room and said, "hi". It was probably the only word of English he knew for when he turned to leave he said it again. An enemy soldier cleaning his room? Not since he'd seen his friends killed the day before had he been so shocked.

The better part of the day was spent in wandering about the camp. Large recreation hall, swimming pool, athletic field, it was becoming increasingly more difficult to remember that he was a prisoner.

Dinner and supper were much the same. "What, lobster salad again? Steak again? Hey this place is going down hill. . ."

After supper, Tom took a long, hot shower. There was plenty of hot water! He hadn't had all the hot water he'd wanted for months! He was just putting his robe on when there was a rapping at the door.

"Who's there?"

"Lisa."

"Who?" he asked, opening the door.

"Lisa. I'm going to be your friend from now on. If you want me."

She linked her arm with his and turned him toward the lighted liquor cabinet.

"can a friend have a drink?" she said.

They had three drinks, and she poured them all.

When Tommy asked bewildered questions, she ducked them adroitly and made him talk about himself, about his life back home, about his plans for the future. The wild thought that he was entertaining some latter day Mata Hari crossed his mind and left it just as quickly; there was nothing of military importance that he could reveal; she seemed interested only in Tommy Dowd. To prove it, she took him to bed.

She returned the next night, and the night after that, and all the nights that followed. And, shortly, he knew he was beginning to wear the same quietly satisfied expression worn by all the inmates of the camp.

Two months after his arrival, he was asked to appear before the commandant. For the first time in weeks, he forced himself to reconsider the meaning

of his bizarre experience. Was it time for the switch? The gimmick? Was he going to be asked to make public statements on the ideology of the enemy?

He steelled himself for the interview, hoping he would bear himself well. Hoping that the past days and nights had not drained him of courage and will.

He saluted the Colonel briskly, and waited while the man with the silky beard and the soft voice said, "Relax son, I have some good news for you."

"Yes sir?" Tommy said.

"You're going home," the Colonel told him. "this afternoon. A truck convoy is taking you and eight others back to a neutral zone. You'll be met by members of your Red Cross there."

"Home?" Tommy said.

"It's a prisoner exchange, arranged through the Red Cross. I'm sure you'll be happy to see your comrades again. Best of luck to you son; I hope your army sees fit to give you a stretch of time back home."

"Thank you sir," Tommy said his heart sinking.

"You don't look very happy."

"I'm happy, sir."

"Good," said the Colonel, and held out his hand, "it's not in the Geneva rules, either, but would you shake?"

Tommy shook his hand briefly, saluted again, less crisply, and went outside, thinking about Lisa. When he went to meet the truck, he found her waiting nearby, with tears in her eyes. He wanted to hold her, but the truck was being loaded quickly, making loud, ugly noises with its engine. He could barely hear her murmured goodbye.

Soon after the trucks left the compound a captain walked into the Colonel's office. He looked as though he had good news, which indeed he did.

Here are the figures for this month, sir," he said smiling, "over four-thousand surrenders! At this rate the war may be over by Christmas, and the more prisoner exchanges we make speeds it up!"

"Uh, yes, Peace. Is there anything like it?" sighed the Colonel, lighting a cigarette. "Peace."



T.V. REVOLUTION

by DENNIS WRIGHT

"Seven thirty!" David said to himself walking toward the family's console T. V. set. He turned the channel selector to 2 and sat down in the brown swivel rocker on the other side of the room.

Shortly thereafter, David's father entered the room and turning to his son asked, "Dave, what's on T.V.?"

David replied quickly, "A special program our U.S. history teacher told us to watch."

"What's it about?"

David thought back for a second, then answered, "Something about current events and how they relate to our past history."

"Good, I think I'll watch it with you. Maybe it'll show you what it really means to be a good American."

"But, Dad, I know. . ."

"Quiet it's starting!"

A man, dressed in a gray suit with a striped tie appeared on the screen.

"Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Tonight we are pleased to present this special program on the Declaration of Independence, called 'What They Meant.' This show should raise some interesting debate on the relevance of the Declaration in modern day society. The film, 'What They Meant', was made by a group of Harvard University political science students under the leadership of Professor John Rubin. And now, on with the film."

A man dressed in 1770's clothing appears on the screen, carrying a rolled parchment. He unfolds the stiff, coarse paper and reads: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . ."

The voice and man fade from the screen and is replaced by a large gathering of people listening to a man speaking.

"I have a dream. . . ."

The words of this powerful speaker echo through the ears and mind of David. David knew this man, he was Dr. Martin Luther King, great black non-violence advocate, who was killed by an assassin's bullet when he was in six grade (five years ago.) He turned to his father and said, "Dad, that's Martin Luther King, isn't it?"

"Yes, son, that's one of those colored people that cause all these riots and everything. I wish I knew what they wanted."

"Dad, I think the black leaders of today are trying to gain the equality they deserve."

"We got them out of slavery, didn't we? Next thing you know they'll want a black president."

"But Dad, . . ."

"Quiet David, let's watch the rest of the show."

Once again the 1770's figure returns to the screen and reads, "We hold these truths to be self-

evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Once again the reader fades out; but this time he is replaced by a scene that shows three policemen bursting into a young couple's apartment and arresting them on a possession of marijuana charge.

David's father looks at him and says, "I suppose there's something wrong with arresting those hippies."

David answered slowly but surely, "Yes, there is. I think each person should have the right to decide whether he or she wants to smoke grass or not."

"That's real smart. Allow anyone that wants to; to get half crazed out of their mind."

"Sort of like you and your friends do down at Mike's, huh dad?"

"That's different!"

"Is it?"

His father didn't answer. Both of them again focused their attention on the T.V.

The Revolutionary War-like man once again appeared and read: That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends; it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it. . . . The voice faded off and an action shot of a mass demonstration of young people being surrounded by National Guardsmen appear. In the background of the noise, music by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young begins.

"Tin soldiers and Nixon coming.

We're finally on our own, This summer I hear the drumming,

Four dead in Ohio,

The picture flashes quickly to a carnival, where a man in picking off the rabbits in a shooting gallery. Then the picture once again becomes the Kent State tragedy.

David, shocked by the revealing reality of what those words, the speaker was reading, meant; just sat in reverent silence.

His father spoke first, "Son, when you get to college, I hope you don't break the law like those kids did."

"Dad, can you even begin to understand that those 4 dead students, Martin Luther King, and all the people who dare to try and change the wrongs in the U.S. today are exactly the same type of people who in 1776 signed the Declaration of Independence and threw off the binds of BRITISH RULE?"

"David, I don't understand you and your ideas. How could I have failed to teach you the difference between right and wrong. You should know from

your history books, that this country was founded on the principles of law and order. I want you to go up to your room and think about the difference between right and wrong.

* * * * *

THE DEATH OF A FRIEND

by DENNIS WRIGHT

Almost done, Bernedette thought to herself, glancing at the mystery story she was about to finish. Bringing her eyes up from the page, she looked at a calendar on the far wall. What a life this is, she thought, the 1870's is certainly better than the 1860's had been; mostly because Paris had become a playground for the world's elite. Her mind continued to wander; this house is the best I've ever lived in, so nice of that lady to sell it to me. Her eyes returned to the book and continued to read deeper into the story until she was quite transparent to reality. The book, so beautifully intriguing and demanding that she began to doubt the lack of reality the story possessed.

Bernedette's trance was suddenly broken by the sound of the doorbell. She wasn't expecting anyone. Who could it be? She sat up from her reclining position on the couch, and fixed her eyes upon the door which led from her living room to the hallway.

In a few seconds, the chamber-maid entered and presented Bernedette with the calling-card of the visitor. She read: Count Nicholas of Moscow.

She was sure she didn't know any Count Nicholas, in fact, she hadn't even heard the name before. Her curiosity got the best of her and she told the chamber-maid to show him in.

The maid returned, followed by a tall man, dressed in a long black cape and black pants with riding boots coming up almost to his knees.

"Sit down, won't you please, Count."

"I prefer to stand, my lady."

"Suit yourself. Now, Count, tell me why have you come to see me?"

The count, trembling as he spoke, said, "My lady, the mission I am here on is one that weighs heavy on my heart." He began to stutter, obviously

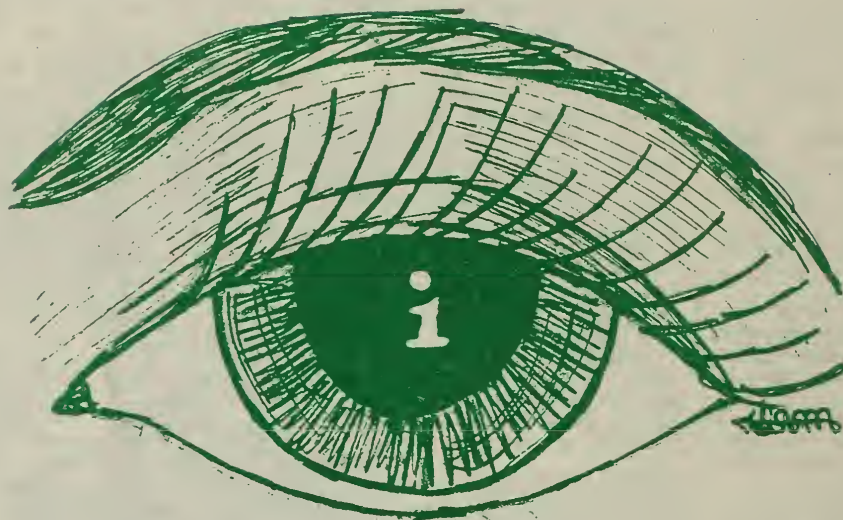
he was very disturbed about something.

He cleared his throat and continued; "About a month ago, in Moscow, I made the acquaintance of Count Andre. His wit, spirit, and outgoing personality made us the best of friends. Over the next couple of weeks the count spent much time over at my house. He enjoyed my three children very much and became the best of friends with my wife of fifteen years. One night our conversation got around to the lovely princess that Count Andre had seen at the ball the preceding night. I told him how the princess and I had been having an affair for about three months and that neither my wife or the princess' husband suspected anything. That night Andre and I talked long and very deep. By the end of our conversation I made a solemn promise that I would end my affair for the good of my family. Well, the next day the prince, who was the husband of my lover, showed up at my house. In his hand he carried a love letter I'd sent the princess. He demanded to know who had been seeing his wife, Andre, realizing the bind I was in, stepped forward and said it was him."

Tears began rolling down the count's eyes as he continued, "Well, my lady, the prince drew a gun from his vest and shot Andre in the heart, before dashing from the room. I held him in my arms until . . .," once again the Count broke down and cried at the feet of Bernedette.

Slowly he continued, "Madame, your husband Count Andre, died to save my honor."

Bernedette, listening to the whole story without moving a muscle, looked upon the sorry face of Nicholas and said, "Count, I didn't want to interrupt so interesting a story, but I feel I must tell you that Count Andre's wife sold me this house last week and moved next door."



editors

William T. Daring, Jr.
Matthew B. Hirons
Brian D. Landgraf

cover design

Lynn Mankiewicz

advisor

Michael N. Kressy